> 03/01/91: STReportâ ¢ #7.09 The Original 16/32 bit Online Magazine!

     - The Editor's Desk   - CPU REPORT   - CPU MacNews
     - NEW MAC LASER   - WF II SHIPS!   - NEW STE DEMOS!
     - STACY POWER   - USER SUPPORT   - OPTICAL STORAGE
     - BORDER MANIA!   - Radical Type!!   - STR Confidential

                  * 1040 STe -> 20mhz - 14mb RAM! *
                       * TURBO 20 ANNOUNCED! *
                     * DON MANDEL NOW WITH ATARI! *

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              ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINEâ ¢
                    The _Number One_ Online Magazine
                          -* FEATURING *-
                    "UP-TO-DATE News and Information"
        Current Events, Original Articles, Hot Tips, and Information
             Hardware - Software - Corporate - R & D - Imports
==
STReport's support BBS, NODE # 350 invites systems using Forem ST and
Turbo Board BBS to participate in the Fido/F-Net Mail Network. Or, call
Node 350 direct at 904-786-4176, and enjoy the excitement of exchanging
information relative to the Atari ST computer arena through an excellent
International ST Mail Network. All registered F-NET - Crossnet SysOps are
welcome to join the STReport Crossnet Conference. The Crossnet Conference
Code is #34813, and the "Lead Node" is # 350. All systems are most
welcome to actively participate. Support Atari Computers; Join Today!
==
   AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY ON: GENIE ~ CIS ~ DELPHI ~ BIX ~ FIDO ~ F-NET

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> The Editor's Podiumâ ¢

     Dealers crying foul, other dealers pointing fingers and still... it
only amounts to a handful who are making noises. Sorta reminds me of the
TV commercial, "please, help me I've fallen and can't get up". Somebody
ought to push the button for these guys.

     Since the market is its own best teacher, STReport recommends to
those who are ever so busy trying to modify a simple but powerful plan to
give Atari's new, aggressive marketing plan a chance to work. After all,
Circuit City, McDuff etc., have proven themselves to be first rate elect-
ronics outlets that are totally customer oriented. Some folks have "re-
quested" that STReport make some suggestions as to how Atari should be
marketing their products. We have done so already. To repeat the answer,
simple and to the point, STReport fully supports Atari's latest marketing
efforts and energetically requests that every Atari user do the same.

     Some have threatened to leave the Atari marketplace, others have
already done so. In all probabilities, those who have left were apt to do
so anyway. Like the guy in blue denim overalls says; "Aw shucks, its a
free country!" Its truly sad to see this happen at any time but to see it
occur at a time when Atari is most responsive is a tragedy. The Mega STe
and the TT030 are designed with the user and future in mind. Can you say
notebook? Wanna bet there's a "notebook" in your future?

     STReport, as you have surely noticed over last 8 months, has been
slowly changing to offer comprehensive coverage and a refreshingly infor-
mative outlook on computing in general. The MS-DOS, IBM/PC platform, the
Mac platform and the Amiga platform enjoy coverage in our humble publica-
tion. Rest assured, Atari will remain the backbone of each of our issues,
while content relative to the other platforms will be presented in hopes
of providing to our readers a timely, well rounded, informative weekly
electronic magazine.

     I would, at this time, like to take a moment to welcome Don Mandel to
the ranks of those who "try harder" at Atari.   Don has come aboard as
Atari's new National Sales & Marketing Guru. Don is slated to handle the
VAR side of the marketing plans for Atari. Formally of Commodore and
Wang, Don brings a great deal of US marketing expertise to Atari. Welcome
and Lots 'o' Luck!

                         Thanks once again for your strong support!

                                         Ralph.....

                         TODAY'S NEWS ..TODAY!

     ""

> STReport's Staff   The regulars and this week's contributors!

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> A "Quotable Quote"â ¢
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   "We think that we have a very clear marketing direction. We are
   trying to sell personal computers to people at the best possible
   price. Of course, we consider back-up and service by our dealers, and
   we want to develop a good dealer network.   We do plan to sell cus-
   tomers like Circuit City [god willing]. We have no plans at present
   to sell at K-Mart. The TT030 will definitely be sold through quali-
   fied dealers who can explain advanced computer use. I cannot make any
   projections on new product from a hardware point of view, but we are
   definitely working on new, portable machines. If I announce one now,
   and don't deliver on time, you'll kill me in ST-Report."

                                                      Sam Tramiel, 2/91
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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

        COMPUSERVE WILL PRESENT $15.00 WORTH OF COMPLIMENTARY ONLINE TIME

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                  ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINEâ ¢
                  ""
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                CALL: 1-800-848-8199 .. Ask for operator 198

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                                    and
                        be online in no time at all!

                    WHAT'S NEW IN THE ATARI FORUMS (March 1)

CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

The transcript from the February 21st conference with Sam Tramiel is
available in last weeks issue of ST REPORT. Download STR708.ARC from
LIBRARY 1 of the Atari Arts Forum (GO ATARIARTS) in case you missed it.

NEW IN ATARI VENDORS FORUM

Please see HOT30.TXT in LIBRARY 16 of the Atari Vendors Forum (GO ATARI-
VEN) for CodeHead Software's announcement of HotWire 3.0 -- a major upg-
rade to their flexible and powerful menu builder/project tracker/program
launcher. A freeware utility program for converting Macpaint files to IMG
raster graphics file format. Download MAC2IMG.ARC from LIBRARY 6 of the
Atari Vendors Forum (GO ATARIVEN).

Example images of fractals produced by Fractal Fantasy. Download FFCOLOR-
1.ARC from LIBRARY 6 of the Atari Vendors Forum (GO ATARIVEN).

Last weeks freeware upload from the generous folks at DOUBLE CLICK SOFT-
WARE -- DC DIRECTORY DUMP -- available in LIBRARY 13 of the Atari Vendors
Forum (GO ATARIVEN).

ATARI PORTFOLIO FORUM

The Atari Portfolio Forum has been named Atari's official online area for
Portfolio support.

The PowerBASIC and Hyperlist beta tests continue. Thanks to the efforts
of Atari Portfolio Forum members, these fine products should be ready for
the public in the very near future.

Be sure to check out the great new Portfolio files available in LIBRARY 1.

> CPU REPORTâ ¢
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  Issue #101
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by Michael Arthur

CPU Systems Roundupâ ¢ XXXI
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                GRAPHICS PROCESSORS, TIGA, AND THE TI 34020 CHIP
                ==

     Graphics processing has come under a lot of attention recently in the
computer industry, as many graphics-intensive tasks, such as ray tracing,
realistic animations used in real-time simulations, and even work in
normal 3-D CAD programs, often take up a comparatively enormous amount of
CPU time.   However, while advances have been made, most graphics chips
(such as the Amiga's Agnus and Denise chips or the ST's Blitter chip) are
either custom-designed for a particular system, not powerful enough for
sophisticated tasks, or not versatile enough to handle many of the
operations involved in computer graphics by themselves. For example,
while the blitter chip can display a circle which is generated by the GEM
VDI very quickly, it cannot draw the circle itself. Texas Instruments has
developed their 340x0 line of graphics processors, which claim to provide
the speed and versatility needed for fast graphics operations on
workstation-class systems. Since Atari's TT030 line of microcomputers
will (hopefully) be finding high-end uses, it is necessary to examine the
options and needs that workstation-level computers.   In   order to
understand what potential graphics processing may have, let us examine
Texas Instruments' 34020 chip, which is currently a leader in the graphics
coprocessor market.

     The TI 34020 chip is a graphics processor. Unlike graphics coproces-
sors, which only handle specific commands given to it, this type of chip
is a general-purpose microprocessor, which is geared towards performing
graphics operations. The TI 34020 can independently access to the main
CPU's DRAM and VRAM, has a local and host bus interface, and can be fully
programmed like a normal processor. It is the descendant of the TI 34010,
the first of TI's 340x0 line of graphics processors.

     The TI 34020 is a 32-bit chip with a 512 byte instruction cache, which
is capable of performing 10 million instructions per second, or from 5-10
times faster than the TI 34010. Designed to perform graphics operations,

it supports most standard graphics and text operations, as well as provid-
ing functions like area fills, Bit block moves (or BitBlit, one of the
functions of the Atari ST's Blitter chip does), calculations on fields in
memory, and built-in support for windowing.   It supports data transfer
rates of up to 20 megabytes per second, and is also capable of displaying
fonts, by storing them as bit-mapped patterns. It has an array of raster
operations as well. It goes far beyond the concept of an ordinary grap-
hics coprocessor, providing many of the amenities needed in areas like
multimedia and desktop publishing.

              TT Video Boards, Standardization, and the TIGA Specification
              ----

     Given its capabilities, several hardware companies began making graph-
ics cards which used the TI 34020 as a graphics chip. However, these
boards were very diverse in abilities, and were all incompatible, meaning
that video drivers had to be written for each of them, and that software
programs had no standard with which to truly utilize the 34020's more
sophisticated capabilities.   In order to solve this dilemma, Texas
Instruments announced TIGA, a software interface for 34010-based video
displays which works independent of graphics resolution, the size of the
color palette, and the amount of displayable colors available on a board.

     TIGA is actually a set of functions, or primitives, which act as a
programming "language" in much the same way that a program can use GEM's
VDI to display graphics. TIGA is made up of three elements:

  - Applications Interface, which is the actual set of commands which
     applications use for graphics operations. This basically provides the
     same function as GEM's VDI.

  - Communications Driver.   This is a TSR program which sends commands
     given by the AI to the 340x0-based video circuitry, and passes the
     results back to the computer.

  - Graphics Manager. This program communicates with the CD, and acts as
     the board's driver software.   It accepts commands given to it by the
     CD, processes them with the video circuitry's hardware, and outputs
     them back to the CD.

     While the Graphics Manager makes a 34010 board TIGA-compatible, the
Applications Interface is the foundation of the TIGA Standard.   It con-
sists of over 150 functions and primitives, which come in three types:

1)   Core Primitives: These instructions, which are standard with TIGA,
     perform basic graphics functions, such as screen clears, cursor shape
     and displaying, and background/foreground colors.

2)   Extended Primitives: These instructions (which are used only if an
     application needs them) provide more sophisticated commands, such as
     performing drawing operations. This set supports most of the 34020's
     capabilities, such as drawing lines or circles, array functions such
     as BitBlit (which is performed by the ST's Blitter Chip), displaying
     fonts, and CAD operations like panning and zooming into pictures.

3)   User-extended (Custom) Primitives: Programmers can design their own
     TIGA primitives, in order to make the 34020 perform operations which
     are typical of the graphical user interface which is in use. Texas
     Instruments itself wrote a TIGA Device Driver for Microsoft Windows by

designing Custom primitives, so all of Windows' screen operations could be performed directly by the 34020 chip.

Since Extended and Custom Primitives are basically the same, a PC Windows application would perform just as quickly with a TIGA Device Driver for MS Windows as if it were specially designed to work with the TIGA Extended Primitives. This has great portends for operating system performance:

- CAD/rendering programs like AutoCADD or Caligari could utilize the 34020's special capabilities directly (using TIGA's standard set of Extended Primitives) for tasks like redraws and zooming to/from images. On sophisticated CAD images, these operations are usually CPU-intensive, and take up a lot of time. Using the 34020 and TIGA, these operations could be done VERY quickly, and wouldn't have to take up a fraction of the processor time that it would ordinarily take. This would result in FAR faster performance in graphics-intensive operations like solid-model object rendering.

- If a microcomputer or workstation vendor were to bundle a TI 34010 Graphics processor (which is a lot less expensive than a 34020 chip) on its motherboard (or video display card), it would only need to use one TIGA "Device Driver" to handle graphics operations on Third-party Video boards. This would mean that someone who later bought a video board with a 34020 chip wouldn't have to reinstall or reconfigure his/her operating system setup in order to fully use that video board's capabilities.

- The TI 34020 chip is downward compatible with the 34010 chip, just as future versions of the 340x0 chip will be. Therefore, TIGA is already capable of taking advantage of the increased speed/capabilities of future generations of graphics coprocessors.

Many PC Companies are already exploring options similar to those stated above. For example, one company has written a TIGA device driver for AutoCAD which allows it to use the 34010's capabilities. Not only did this result in high-resolution graphics, but using the 34010 as a display list processor made AutoCAD graphics operations occur almost instantaneously. In addition, several TIGA-based video boards for IBM clones now have device drivers for Microsoft Windows, giving owners of Windows-based systems far more options (and far less potential stress) for upgrading to high-end video displays.

However, there are several negative marks against this idea, one of which is the price of the 34020 chip. A 50 MHZ 34010 costs less than $60, and the component cost for making a 34010 video board is considerable. This has placed Video Boards based on the TI 34010 graphics processor above the $800 price range, with most 34020-based boards being priced at $1500 or more. However, one of the true constants of the computer industry has been how quickly high-end hardware becomes affordable.

One of the favorite uses for computers are their graphics. With the 68030 TT both powerful and versatile enough to provide workstation-class capabilities, all of the available options for utilizing that power must be examined. This essay on TIGA and the TI 34010/34020 line of graphics coprocessors is meant to be a "first step" in evaluating these options, and exploring the possibilities which microcomputers make so eminently tantalizing.

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                    THE ATARI PORTFOLIO FORUM
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On CompuServe

#11

by Walter Daniel 75066,164

   BJ Gleason uploaded a new version of PBASIC this week. Version 4.1
(PBUP41.ZIP) mostly fixes bugs, but a couple of new statements were added.
He also uploaded a program that will "squeeze" PBASIC files (SPB.EXE) by
removing unneeded line numbers, REM statements, and spaces.

   Some new BASIC programs were uploaded as well.   BJ converted a Model
100 program to create QCHESS.BAS, a slow (about 7 minutes per move) Chess
program. If you're interested in Chess for the Portfolio, download BJ's
PCHESS.EXE.   PCHESS is a compiled version of QCHESS and runs much faster.
PCHESS displays the board using text, so I'd suggest that you get a small
travel Chess set with magnetic pieces and refer to the Portfolio screen to
enter moves. BJ also uploaded VADER.BAS, a Space Invaders-type program
for PBASIC 4.1. Hugh Campbell uploaded his Conversion Calculator (CC.BAS)
that comes with 30 English-metric factors already in the program.

   The on-again, off-again saga of WordPerfect for the Portfolio seems to
be on again. A WordPerfect person posted a message with the news that the
WordPerfect folks have a programmer officially working with the Portfolio
developers kit on this project.   The tentative goal is for a Portfolio
version of WordPerfect Executive that will list for $149.   There is still
some negotiation to be done with the marketing department before the
product is finalized and approved, but there are at least three Portfolio
owners employed by WordPerfect Corp.   For the full text, see message
#9537.

   John Feagans (75300,703) seems to have released his driver for the
Tandy PDD-2 portable floppy drive as a commercial product. The PDD-2
connects to the Portfolio serial interface as an RS-232 device and can
store about 200k on a 3.5 inch floppy disk. I have no other information,
so send queries to John in the forum.

   As I've reported in the past, there are other parallel port floppy
drives that could conceivably be connected to a Portfolio. Sysgen has
such a portable drive (the "Portable EasyFloppy", 3.5" and 5.25" versions,
list price of $395) and is considering developing a software driver for
the Portfolio to use their product. If you are interested, send a message
to 76424,3123 or call Robyn Dudly at 800-821-2151.

David Stewart has been working with Turbo Pascal and reports that
versions before 5.5 might run on the Portfolio. If you use LZEXE to
compress the TPC.EXE file, then copy TPC.EXE plus SYSTEM.TPU and DOS.TPU
to a 128k, you might be able to compile Turbo Pascal programs on your
Portfolio. Brett Glass reports that Turbo Pascal 3.01A, the generic
MS-DOS version, works as is on the Portfolio.

     It's editorial time! OK, I admit it. I'm an engineer. What does
this have to do with the Portfolio? Simple--I think that Atari and soft-
ware developers are missing a potentially huge market by not positioning
the Portfolio to get a piece of the programmable calculator pie. I bought
my Portfolio hoping that some type of mathematics package would become
available, but none has to date. Fortunately, BJ Gleason created PBASIC,
so I have created some numerical analysis programs on my own. Still, the
Portfolio could do much more if the right software was available.

     While some of the high-end Hewlett-Packard and Texas Instruments
calculators have lots of good stuff, they don't have QWERTY keyboards and
40 by 8 character displays (240 by 64 pixels in graphics mode). The Portf-
olio screen would make dealing with matrices easier and the Portfolio
keyboard would make formula entry more direct than for calculators.
There's also no need to restrict a Portfolio program to simply emulating
programmable calculators. Earlier versions of some excellent mathematics
programs such as MATLAB or MathCAD might be small enough to fit on a 512k
ROM card or even a 128k ROM card. The fully-featured Macintosh version of
MATLAB is less than 300k! I think that with a little source code mas-
saging, some existing programs could be running on the Portfolio soon.

     Please remember that my editorial rantings represent my opinions only,
not those of STReport, Atari, The MathWorks, MathCAD, or the Franklin
Mint. If you've got any ideas about Portfolio products, send me a message
in the forum.

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> CPU STATUS REPORTâ ¢   LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS
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   Issue #10

   Compiled by: Lloyd E. Pulley, Sr.

- Redmond, Washington   COUNTERFEITERS NABBED BY MICROSOFT

Microsoft was awarded a summary judgement against J&S International, JIP
Design, Joe Fok, Susan Chan and Norman Chan, five sources of at least
25,000 counterfeit copies of MS-DOS which had an end-user value of $1.8

million.   A hearing to determine damages and other issues will be held
in May.

- Cambridge, Massachusetts   LET YOUR COMPUTER DO THE WALKING!

The first CD-ROM to contain the business telephone numbers from every
U.S. Yellow Pages telephone books was recently released by Dataware. The
CD-ROM Yellow Pages contains nearly 10 million business telephone
numbers, comes with software that allows it to be operated in a memory-
resident mode, is compatible with MS-DOS systems and will be priced at
$399.

- Washington, D.C.   PIRACY SETTLEMENT WON BY SPA

Davy McKee Corp., a construction engineering firm, agreed to settle with
The Software Publishers Association (SPA) for $300,000 in a software
copyright infringement suit. The suit, which had been filed on November
16, 1990, alleged that Davy McKee routinely copied software copyrighted
by Lotus, Software Publishing and WordPerfect, in violation of the
Copyright Act.

Along with the $300,000 settlement, Davy McKee agreed to a consent
decree prohibiting illegal use of the plaintiff's software, to destroy
all unauthorized copies of software manufactured by all SPA members and
to institute formal internal copy control procedures at all of its
offices. In addition, the SPA will be allowed to perform annual software
audits at Davy McKee over the next two years.

- Waltham, Massachusetts   LOW COST MAC LASER PRINTER FROM GCC

GCC Technologies has introduced the first under $1,000 Macintosh laser
printer.   The $999 Personal LaserPrinter II will work with all Mac
models, including the new Classic and LC.   GCC feels the PLP II "will
bring superior laser printer laser printed output to customers who were
previously limited to inkjet solutions." Apple and Hewlett-Packard are
also expected to introduce an under $1,000 Mac laser printer sometime
this year.

- Novato, California   WORDSTAR ENTERS MACINTOSH MARKET

WordStar, who last year shipped a quarter of a million word processors
in the MS-DOS market, entered into an agreement to acquire Lifetree
Software, the developer of Correct Grammar, a grammar checker for MS-DOS
and Macintosh computers.

Lifetree, which was founded in 1981 by Camilo Wilson, had sales revenues
of $4 million in 1990.   Lifetree will become a division of WordStar and
will give WordStar an immediate market share into the Macintosh

marketplace.

- Fort Worth, Texas   NEW LOW-END PC FROM RADIO SHACK

Radio Shack has announced its new Tandy 1000 TL/3, a 10 mhz 286-based PC
for the home-office market.

As part of the selling price of $1,099.95, the TL/3 will come with MS-
DOS 3.3, Radio Shack's DeskMate integrated software package included.
It will also include, 640k of RAM, a 3.5" floppy drive, 4 XT expansion
slogs, keyboard, a PS/2-style mouse, a 3.5-inch diskette drive, a serial
port, a parallel port, two joystick ports, a microphone jack, a
headphone jack with volume control, an internal speaker and a real-time
clock. The TL/3 can store and play back speech and sound.

The unit supports monochrome alphanumeric, Hercules monochrome, and CGA
and Tandy Enhanced CGA displays, and an optional VGA is available.

- Fremont, California   SYQUEST MOVES

SyQuest Technology Inc. has moved to a new location at 47041 Bayside
Parkway in Fremont, California from its former Warm Springs Road
address. The new 87,500 square foot facility includes 8,000 square feet
of clean room space for the production of removable disk cartridges.
SyQuest disk drives are manufactured in Singapore.

- White Plains, New York   PS/2 PRICE REDUCTIONS BY 5-20%

IBM has announced 5 TO 20 percent price reductions on several models of
its Personal System/2 (PS/2) family of computers.

- Tokyo, Japan   JAPANESE MINISTRY AGAINST WAR SIMULATION SOFTWARE

The Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has
reportedly told Japanese software makers and personal computer game
magazines, they should not promote war images. MITI said that many
software makers are promoting war-related games and it might encourage
war.

- Monterey, California   NEW MULTIUSER DOS FROM DRI

DR Multiuser DOS is the most recent multiuser operating system to be
released by Digital Research, the company that created CP/M, GEM and the
MS-DOS compatible DR DOS operating system.

DR Multiuser DOS, a replacement for the company's Concurrent DOS 386,
runs on 80386 and 80486-based computers, and can support up to 64 users.
The new operating system, which will be available in March, has a retail
price of $695 and is positioning itself as a low-cost alternative to
Unix which allows users to retain their DOS applications.

    ****

                    :HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:
                    _____

        To sign up for GEnie service: Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

                Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).
                        Wait for the U#= prompt.

                Type: XTX99587,CPUREPT then, hit RETURN.

                        **** SIGN UP FEE WAIVED ****

            The system will now prompt you for your information.

                -> NOW! GENIE STAR SERVICE IS IN EFFECT!! <-

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> STR Portfolio News & Informationâ ¢   Keeping up to date...
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                    THE ATARI PORTFOLIO FORUM
                    =========================

On CompuServe

#12

by Walter Daniel 75066,164

    David Barker posted a fascinating message about the "Fn" (Function)
key. He noticed that the Fn key works as a "sticky" key, i.e., you do NOT
have to hold the Fn key down while pressing another key.   The Portfolio
manual clearly states that the Fn key must be held down, but my experim-
ents show otherwise! The sticky-key technique works with those keys
marked with blue letters: 1 through 10 for F1 through F10; the cursor
keys for Home, Pg Up, Pg Dn, and End; and O for Off.   Actually, you have
to press the Fn key again to get the Portfolio to switch off. You must

hold down the Fn key when pressing the Ins/Del key to change Insert/Overs-
trike modes.

     See message #9578 for word about Portfolio products that DIP is of-
fering in the United Kingdom.   Word is that Atari will mail the second
version of the APB (Accessories and Peripherals Bulletin) to all Portfolio
owners in the near future.

     I mentioned the possibility that certain versions of Turbo Pascal
might run on the Portfolio last week. A message in the forum pointed out
that version 4 requires 256k of memory, so a Portfolio cannot run it.
Keep in mind that version 3 will run, though.

     BJ Gleason uploaded his PBASIC editor for PCs this week (PBE13.ZIP).
This PC-only program provides a PBASIC development and file transfer
environment for desktops.   Some PBASIC programs were uploaded as well.
Hugh Campbell posted a second version of his Conversion Calculator (CC-
2.BAS) as well as a data entry program (DB1.BAS) that will create tab-del-
imited files suitable for reading by database programs running on desktop
machines. Another PBASIC game, Blockbuster (BLKBST.BAS) is now available.

     Do you keep sensitive information in your Portfolio? Do you want to
keep such information safe from prying eyes?   Then download DES10.ARC, a
Portfolio data encryption program. This program uses the Data Encryption
Standard that was developed by the U.S. government for data security.

Editor Note:
     You aren't seeing things, there are two Portfolio news articles in
this week's issue, #11 was omitted last week. Mea Culpa.

_____

> THE FLIP SIDE STR Featureâ ¢   "A different viewpoint"
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                    A LITTLE OF THIS, A LITTLE OF THAT
                    ==================================

by Michael Lee

If you're a games player, you should love this weeks issue as there has
been lot of discussion on the major networks recently concerning some
new games coming out for the ST.

You'll probably notice that I'm trying out a new format again this week.

I just haven't found one yet that I've been pleased with.   Let me know
if you like it or don't like it.

Question from Robert Floyd from the Softlogik RT on Genie...
    Does SoftLogik plan to support the DeskJet 500 in a more complete way
    i.e., support for the built-in fonts and font cartridges?

Answer from Nevin Shalit (SoftLogik RT sysop) on Genie...
    I am 99.9999% certain that there will not be support for fonts in the
    various font cartridges. This just isn't the way PageStream works.

Background information (compiled from several posts) about DPaint ST,
from Electronic Arts (EA), and the company that developed it, ArtisTech
Development, from Anthony Pabon (ArtisTech's on-line representative) on
CIS....

    ArtisTech Development is a company out of Sacramento, CA. and we
    wrote DPaint ST.   When we were first designing it, we had no idea
    that it would be published by EA (or called "Deluxe Paint").   One of
    our goals for DPaint was to create an awesome paint/animation program
    that would have all features available to 512K users.

    We went through the England office of EA because it has a MUCH better
    base and understanding of the ST computer.   It is a strange
    arrangement, as EA in the US has to import DPaint, even though we are
    100 miles from their US office. I am not on-line as an official
    representative of EA, but I thought I'd donate any info that might be
    useful to others.

    It is Electronic Arts' product as far as customer support and service
    are concerned. They get paid for that sort of thing.   You call them
    about updates etc.

From Wayne Watson on Genie...

    I just purchased the ST4096C board for a Simm memory upgrade...After
    receiving it, I read over the docs and tore apart the ST and started
    modifying it.

    After about an hour of desoldering the resistors and rewiring things,
    I was ready to put the boards in place. This required removing the
    shifter chip (it was socketed) and placing the 1st board on top of
    the socket.   Everything seemed to fit perfectly so I powered up. I
    immediately got a high pitch noise from the power supply and the
    little surface mount chip on the board started smoking. I turned off
    the computer and called up John Russell. He told me what seemed to be
    wrong and I went about trying to fix it. Anyway, to make a long story
    short, I had placed the shifter board upside down. After looking over
    the docs, I noticed in the bottom righthand corner of one of the doc
    sheets, was a little diagram. After carefully looking over it, I
    noticed that the board was upside down. Anyway, I reinstalled it and
    said a little prayer and everything went fine. I finished touching
    things up and put it all back together. I ran the memory test program
    and all went well. The surface mount chip must be a tough little

thing because it has been performing flawlessly for the past week.

The board that holds the Simms fits right under the keyboard. I still
have room to add other things later on if I need to. The Simms are
now as cheap as the Dram chips and they are a lot easier to deal
with. You just place the Simm in the socket, push it back until it
snaps in place. That is all there is to it. No legs to bend or
anything. The Simms also sit at about a 30 degree angle so you do not
need much clearance.

Anyone who is thinking of upgrading their memory, I strongly
recommend the ST4096C board. It is a very nice design. You do need
some soldering skills or have someone who does install it. Make sure
you install the shifter board correctly. It will save you a headache.
I got lucky (someone up there is watching over me) but you may not.
Also, the board comes with everything you need to install it. It even
includes the solder (but not the soldering iron).

Comments from Lee (Lexicor Software) on CIS about problems running some
games on the new STe's and TOS 1.6x...

...You should know by now that it is quite customary for game writers
to break official programming guide lines. I am surprised that so
many games do run.

You will see that the authors of the most popular games will begin to
port their work over to the new Atari machines as they become more
numerous (sic).

Just think how exciting it will be when you can play your games in
256 colors with stereo sound and save your best games to video
tape!!!

From Lauren (WordFlair) on Genie...

User updates are shipping. We held them up for a last minute bug and
because we were hoping to get all the FSM GDOS changes made to avoid
sending an update disk. However, as Atari still has not released
final pricing or shipping dates, we have gone ahead and shipped to
users...if you don't get your update in the next week (week of 02-28-
91), give us a call at 415/461-4552 and we'll check your order again.

The WF II swaps will not ship till the end of the month. We are still
getting orders from Canada postmarked the 15th and want to
consolidate the orders to our duplicator. So we'll send the order off
to the duplicator next Monday so look for your swaps in the next
couple of weeks.

Please bear with us during this order consolidation time. We do this
to minimize cost and administrative handling in order to give to be
able to offer our users very good pricing. Thank you all for your
patience.

From J.ROY18 on Genie...

HERO! I've been waiting for this for while...I had left the author,
Dan Winslow, a message a few months ago, asking if Hero II would
someday support modem/MIDI connections, for simultaneously 2 player
play, when they can be in different rooms, or whatever. He told me
about his new program, HERO!, which will be commercially available
soon, and is much improved! Although there is no MIDI ability...there
is a modem option so you don't have to wait on your teammate.

From Cliff Allen on Genie...

    B.R.A.C.E. (Blue Ridge Atari Computer Enthusiasts) in Asheville N.C.
    is Proud to announce the 2nd ANNUAL COMPUTER FEST.

    Come one, come all to the Land Of the Sky and meet the Biggest little
    Atari users group in western North Carolina.

    Date: 20 July 1991 Place: Westgate Shopping Mall (Junction of I-240 &
    I-26) Asheville, N.C. Time: Noon to 6pm

    Stay tuned for further updates.

    Points of contact:
                         Clifford E. Allen
                          GEnie- [C.ALLEN17]
                  Internet- CALLEN@UNCAVX.UNCA.EDU
                    BITNET- CALLEN@UNCA.BITNET
                    Home Phone (704)258-3758

General information from Spectrum HoloByte about some of their products
from CIS...

    ...the Atari ST version of Flight of the Intruder is coming along
    very nicely. We hope to finish the program in a month or two.

    ...We're just finishing up VETTE! for the Macintosh this week, but it
    still doesn't look good for either an Atari ST or Amiga version. Not
    enough interest in the product overseas to make it profitable.

Question from Greg Zepka from CIS....

    Are there any plans to make a WW1 fighter combat game for the ST?

Answer from Spectrum HoloByte on CIS...

    ...sorry but we don't have any plans right now to do a WWI fighter
    combat game. I guess the most recent ones have been Blue Max by 360,
    Knights of the Sky by MicroProse and Red Baron by Dynamix. Not sure
    which ones will be converted to the Atari ST, though.

Compiled from several posts by Pattie and Bill Rayl (AIM Magazine) on
Genie...

    We'd like to announce the addition of Matt Ratcliff (Mat*Rat) to the

pages of Atari Interface magazine. Matt is well known for his articles on the Atari 8bit line of computers, and has many articles to his credit.

Matt joins fellow author Dave Plotkin, who has been contributing a monthly column to AIM for about half a year now. These two make a fine combination, and should have lots of good stuff for our readers.

....Atari Interface magazine has jumped in circulation from 4,500 to over 6,000 with the addition of overseas distribution. We're going to hold our ad rates to their current level, so advertising in AIM becomes an even better bargain...if you'd like to find out about our rates, please call me at (313) 973-8825.

Atari Interface offers FREE full page ads for user group sponsored AtariFests. Up to 3 months worth of advertising is offered free of charged, based on availability of ad space.

Although we've been offering this service since we began publishing, it hasn't been publicized much and only a few clubs have even used the service. Now that AIM is sold in bookstores across the US and Canada, as well as distributed overseas, placing an ad in AIM for your club's show could prove very profitable.

If you're planning to put on a show, contact us at (313) 973-8825 to discuss advertising.

About Populous 2 from Jim Ratkos on Genie...

Populous 2 should be out sometime late summer or early fall. There is a small write up in the March issue of ST Format. It goes something like this:

  "Bullfrog, the programming team behind Populous, are currently working on the follow-up, ST FORMAT can exclusively reveal. Populous was the biggest selling game of 1989 and one of the top five 16-bit titles ever, selling 46,000 copies on the ST, so news of a follow-up is bound to create considerable interest."

  "Populous 2 will feature completely new code and is expected sometime in September. Peter Molyneux, the head programmer at Bullfrog, said, "It's still very early in development, but I can't wait to play it. We're using our cleverest routines yet, but we're concentrating on gameplay - honing it into the ultimate game." He added that the displays are now working four times more quickly than those in the original but with ten times the depth."

  "A brand new divine being has been introduced into the gameplay, namely - and we've been trying to work this one out - an atheist. The three deities in Populous 2 will have 30 divine effects to choose from:"

  "Swamps Volcanoes with fiery boulders and lava streams Earthquakes where the land cracks open and people and houses fall in Tornadoes Tidal Waves Lightning Bolts Plagues Pestilence A religious kamikaze maniac Armageddon Druid Priests Paladins Parting Seas Fireballs."

  "Populous 2 is actually being developed on an ST, and the Bullfrogs

have chosen to use a completely new display routine in the program,
along with some ideas they picked up while creating the acclaimed
PowerMonger. The game will include over 200 different animations,
compared to Populous' 20. The landscape will also be fully animated
with terrain-sensitive land blocks. What's more, buildings and
cities will literally grow, rather than just transform as they did
in the original Populous."

About the original Populous - from J.ROY18 on Genie...

...EA said they have a newer version of the STe compatible Populous
coming in from the UK within 2 weeks, which will correct the locking-
up problem some STe users, like myself, have. They suggest sending
the disk back with a letter saying you are waiting for the new STe
version coming in from the UK.

From Gordon Moore (author of Super Boot) on Genie..

It's been a while since I've released a new version of Super Boot,
but a new version of Super Boot will be out in about 1 - 2 weeks. New
features include:
   - Digitized Sound -- you can load a single sound, a random sound,
     or you can link sound files to pictures
   - You can now change and save function keys within SUPERBT.PRG
   - You can change the Startgem program within SUPERBT.PRG
   - Optional attention bell
   - You can link date/time setting to function keys, so that you only
     set the date/time for programs that really need it
   - Plus several bug fixes

The digitized sound is really something else! I'll leave another
message in this topic when I upload the final version (Version 7.0).

From Jim Burton of ANTIC on Genie...

Unfortunately, because of the recent move to a bi-monthly format, and
the need to change the Feb issue to reflect that (new cover, new
editorial, etc.) The Feb/March issue is going to be late. The
earliest it will be mailed will be in mid-March. However, issues
following that are already planned out, and are practically finished,
so they will be out on schedule.

Until next week.....

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> LAND OF OZ! STR FOCUSâ ¢   "..Atari has just started a new campaign.."

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                        NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA
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by Gary Spiteri

     Atari Australia are suffering from a very similar condition to that of
Atari America. Simply put, there is just not enough advertising (in fact
there's been none in a good while). There has _never_ been one Mega ST or
STE advert on nation TV. In 1990 they was one set of adverts - and that
was the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cartoon movie being sponsored by the
Lynx and 7800 game systems. Of course the Amiga is advertised and has a
strong marketing base...

     The result is Australia is _very_ Amiga-ised. I had read somewhere
that per head of population (only 16 million people down here), Australia
has the greatest Amiga concentration in the world.

     But the ST users are tough people!   Those who own Atari's are very
faithful and its a real shame that Atari Oz doesn't treat us better. Each
of the States of Oz has a Atari User Group, which are strong although not
huge. I am proud to be a committee member of the Atari Computer Enthusi-
asts (New South Wales) - ACE (NSW) for short. We have around 350 ST
members and although small, we have close ties with Tony Barker (progra-
mmer of SOUNDOFF, FANTASIA etc., STE demo's) and Stephan Adam, another
great programmer (you should see his ST_EYES - a conversion of Mac EYEBA-
LLS).   I believe that between Swavek Jabrzemski (President of ACE) and
myself, we are possibly the most vocal Australians.

     We seem to suffer from a severe case of isolation, and I suppose this
explains our heavy use of this Echo. This echo has introduced Australia
to KAOS, NVDI and OVERSCAN - powerful items of great interest that no-one
knew about. We also keep informed through "ST Informer", "Current Notes",
"ST Applications" (from the UK based ST Club), "STart", "ST World", "ST
Format", "ST Report" and "Znet" online magazines. Early 1990 saw the
first Australian ST specific magazine "Your ST" published - it never went
past the pilot issue. Because of these we know a fair bit about what's
going on... including the Mega STE.

     Most of the serious software we buy is either from importers (and
there are not too many of them) or direct from the company. Swavek even
goes as far as telephoning many of the overseas companies and the news
that he is calling from Australia usually results in a cheaper price! He
was the _first_ nonGerman user of OverScan! (Swavek, I know we'll be
reading this, I hope you don't mind me rattling off like this!)

     Prices of items vary, though generally they are somewhat expensive
because we don't have the market to support profits through cheaper pri-
ces. Its less expensive to buy direct with overseas money orders - Ame-
rica being the best value. Games are the most popular software around and
locally cost AUS$70 each.   1040 STE's cost AUS$995 and 520STE AUS$795.
Buy them through Atari's distributor and for a extra AUS$100, one gets a 2

year extended warranty (Ideal when getting my DMA chip changed to the one
that doesn't corrupt Hard Drives). Mono monitors (SM124) cost AUS$400 (!)
and the new 14" colour monitor cost AUS$495 while the older SC1224 used to
cost AUS$595.

    Although Atari was quiet through the Christmas sales season, it ap-
pears that Atari has just started a new campaign... We'll wait and see.

    I suppose because of our "isolation" I turn to you European guys to
help out by keeping us informed. Again I plea to you guys tell me what
STE specific stuff is out there - you're seen my message that includes a
list of what ACE (NSW) has - what else is there? Oh well, I'm sorry to
paint such a picture but I hope you appreciate the way we feel when we
Australians look at the healthy European market, and the bad feeling we
experience when we look at our own. We can but hope though, that 1991
will be better.

    Tony Barker - the programmer behind SOUNDOFF, FANTASIA etc has just
completed two new programs - and they're _brilliant_ !

    MYMONO.PRG is Tony's long awaited STE only MONO Emulator. It uses
various STE hardware including the blitter and hardware scrolling, making
this the _fastest, most feature laden MONO emulator ever to appear_ !

    It even includes a special "Amiga like" interlace mode to create the
best 640*400 emulation on the colour monitor (there's a little flicker,
and there are _two_ other emulation modes). I've run Calamus on a TV and
it looked, and ran at a usable speed.

    Tony's latest STE demo - MVNGPXLS.PRG is in his own words "My most
technically advanced demo yet!". The sample is _brilliant_ and the 3D
scrolling Star Field is like _nothing_ you're very seen before. Its
brilliant !

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> STACY POWER STR InfoFileâ ¢   Atari Stacy Battery products...
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                    MULTIBYTE INCORPORATED
                       PRESS RELEASE

Multibyte Inc, manufacturer of the Atari Stacy Battery products and
cases,   is ALIVE and doing WELL. The products we are currently
manufacturing are:

   CASEY Plus - semi rigid powered case for the Atari Stacy computer.
              Allows for the use of the Stacy and cartridges devices
              while in the case. Comes with 4.5 hour battery, case and

battery charging adaptor. MSRP $368.00

    CASEY   - semi rigid powered case for the Atari Stacy computer
                only. Comes with 4.5 hour battery, case, and battery
                charging adaptor. MSRP $348.00

    CASEY Jr. - soft carry case (unpowered) for the Atari Stacy
                MSRP $135.00

    CASEY Jr. Internal Battery - 2.8 hour internal battery pack that fits
                inside battery compartment the Stacy computer. Comes
                with battery pack and charging adaptor. Does not require
                modification of computer. MSRP $198.00

    Our Casey line of products DO NOT void Atari Corporation's Stacy
    warranty.

    NOTE: all time tests have been made on a Atari Stacy 4 using floppy
    access, hard drive tests, memory tests running consecutively with out
    a screen saver. Times will vary on different computer models.

This product line has been under development since December of 1989.
This project has had a number of setbacks due to the complexity of the
engineering for the battery packs, the charging adaptors, and custom
building the cases. Due to vendor supply problems, we have been unable
to meet our production needs until now.

In the past our suppliers have proven to be unreliable and unable to
meet our demands until recently (anger has it's uses). Fortunately these
little (lengthy) and (extremely) costly delays are over as of February
5, 1991. Our shipments are due to come in on a regular schedule.

We received our first production shipment of batteries and chargers
January 31, 1991. These products will be shipping to our customers
starting February 1, 1991. If you have paid for and not received your
product by February 10th, 1991 PLEASE call us immediately so that we may
correct our error. If you have product on backorder and have not
received it by March 1,1991 let us know! Right now things are extremely
hectic and we now have over 150 backorders to process please hang in
there. We are shipping product as fast as it is assembled.

I would like to take a moment to thank each and every customer for their
patience, trust, comments, suggestions, complaints, and perseverance. I
would also like to apologize to our loyal and frustrated customers from
the depth of our hearts for the frustration and gray hair we have
caused. Please accept this apology for the delay in processing your
orders. After 6 months of waiting, false hopes, and broken delivery
dates we are starting to get things rolling properly. Forgive us our
transgressions.

Thank you for your patronage and if you have any questions, suggestions,
comments, or complaints please call (703) 406-9139 anytime between
9:00am and 9:00 pm EST Monday through Friday.

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                CUSTOMER SUPPORT AT ITS BEST!
                =============================

by Steve Barnes

     Living in Canada has its advantages,   namely, we get first crack at
much of the new Atari hardware and provide shelter to some of the best
developers in the world.   We also have a devalued dollar and something
called 'free trade'. (HA! What a joke.)

     In May of 1990 I decided I would purchase a processor accelerator from
Fast Technology, I decided to purchase it from the U.S. as it was sig-
nificantly cheaper then purchasing one in Canada.

     My T16 arrived within 2 weeks and was shipped via Airmail. Reading
over   the installation instructions I determined that it was a piece of
cake to install. I broke out the soldering iron and set to installing the
board.   Well, its not as easy as it looks! If you buy yourself any kind
of upgrade that requires more than a little bit of soldering, PAY SOMEBODY
TO DO IT!

     Anyway, the difference was phenomenal. I loved it. But after about 2
days, I noticed some very weird things happening. I checked the board out
and I could make the system crash at the same spot repeatedly. I called
Jim Allen (owner of Fast Technologies) and explained my predicament.   No
problem says Jim, send me the board and I'll fix it up pronto for you.

     The board was sent back to Jim via registered mail in September (note,
this is out of warranty by this time.).   I've since learned that if any
electrical equipment is going to fail, it is most likely to happen in the
first few hours of operation - this is known as the 'burn-in period'
claimed by manufacturers.   If it doesn't fail in the first few hours of
operation it will most likely run without problems for years.

     I gave Jim a call a few weeks later to verify that he had received the
package. He had, and informed me that the board was in fact defective and
would be replaced at no charge to me. Fantastic. But, there was a probl-
em, he was temporarily out of stock on replacements for about 4 to 6
weeks. Well, I appreciated him telling me the truth rather than be told
that the replacement was on its way.

     November; I called Jim to check the status of my new T16. The boards
just came in and yours will be shipped immediately. I don't mind telling
you that once you have a little bit of speed,   its painful to go back
to 8mHz!

     December;   Where the   heck is my T16! "You mean you don't have it
yet?". Nope. "Oh oh, let me check on it." Turns out my replacement got
lost in the shuffle (literally!). No problem, Jim has always told me the
truth. I've done similar things myself.   I was told the board would be

sent to me Federal Express first thing in the morning.

Two weeks later, Jim, where the heck is my T16? "YOU DON'T HAVE IT YET!", nope. Jim gave me the waybill number for Federal Express (FE). I called FE in Toronto to trace the package.

Yes, we have your package but there is a problem. It says its value is $1.00 and that it contains some type of computer hardware. "This doesn't seem correct to us. So we're holding it here until we receive a copy of the invoice from FastTech. We'll call the supplier and get him to FAX us a copy."

January; I called FE again and asked, where is my package? "We're waiting for a copy of the invoice". I then call Jim at FastTech. FE hasn't contacted him. I explain what's happening. He now immediately sends FE a FAX of the invoice.

A week later. I called FE again. "Yessir, we received a copy of the invoice, and its been processed and held at our depot until we receive duty, federal sales tax, G.S.T, brokerage and holding fees". FE said.

I simultaneously blew a gasket and gave myself a serious case of vapor lock. The FE trace agent explained to me that the invoice (from FastTech) says the board is replacement and is thus, treated as a new purchase (I have a copy of the way-bill, its says clearly the board is a repaired unit). Meaning I must, once again, pay duty etc., on the board. I then called Customs and Excise Canada to find out exactly what was going on. It's true. Unless I am able to prove that I did, in fact, export the board to FastTech for repair, I would be obliged to pay the duties twice.

No problem, I have my receipt when I sent the package back to FastTech registered mail. Not good enough. We need the export form you filled out at the post office. ???. Seems one of our revered postal employees was supposed to have me fill out an export form. Well, you know the post office.

I called FE once again. The trace agent handling my problem package is sick, dead, not in, out to lunch, washing the cat, etc. Fine, I'd like to speak to the manager. Now, I must tell the story yet again. Why should FE care HOW the package was labeled if it labeled properly to start with? SLAM. I get hung up on. I call back an hour later. SLAM.

A terrible way to do business if you ask me. I called FastTech, they agreed to have it returned to them. Fastech would resend the package Air Mail and marked as a "gift" (This is a common method for those of us living in Canada to get around paying the excessive duty and taxes).

In the meantime, I receive notification from FE stating that if the package is not picked up in 14 days, it will be sold or destroyed. I find this to be utterly amazing, as to date, I've have NEVER received any type of invoice or bill stating that I owe FE any money whatsoever. Also included in the letter was a photo-copy of the way-bill. It seems that Jim Allen did declare the board as a repair (There is a huge difference in the eyes of customs between a replacement and a repair). Which means that FE, in their "infinite wisdom", decided to interpret the package in there own way.

Jim Allen then agreed to send me cost free replacement (these things aren't cheap folks!)

To date, I've spent in excess of $30 in long distance calls to FE and
to FastTech, I've been hung up on, lied to and have never received any
form of an invoice from Federal Express. To top it all off, earlier
today, I finally received an invoice from Federal Express stating I owe
them $38.00! Shipping fees for a package they were _supposed_ to send
back to FastTech more than a month ago (he still hasn't received the
original back yet).

     Throughout this entire ordeal, Jim Allen has been sympathetic, un-
derstanding and has extended every possible courtesy to me, absolutely
above and beyond what most people would be grateful to receive. Please,
if I could, in anyway, persuade any of you to purchase an accelerator
board, by all means, don't think twice about purchasing a board from Fast
Technology. The product is a quality piece of work, it performs better
than advertised, and the company stands behind it far and above the norm.

     As for Federal Express, a letter has been sent to the Better Business
Bureau with documentation and I implore you to do business with just about
ANY other courier on the continent.   Dissatisfied is a gross understat-
ement. How they got to be as large as they are is far beyond me.

     Thanks for your time, and I hope my experiences dealing with FE,
FastTech and customs will provide some degree of enlightenment.

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> UPS & CANADA! STR FOCUSâ ¢   "the taxmen & UPS "cometh and bungleth"
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                    A HORROR STORY AT THE BORDER
                    ============================

by Michael Lee

Two compiled posts from Nathan (ISD) from Genie...

Allow me to take this opportunity to relate some facts that are starting
to cause me real aggravation, not to mention money. This is in regards
to UPS, United Parcel Service. I will share the facts of two bills with
you and I ask you all to bear this in mind whenever you choose to use
this service when sending us anything from the USA to Canada.

Story #1: A customer sent back 2 disks for updating. He already owned
1.09N but had somehow inadvertently trashed his disks. So he sent them
back to us so we could redo his originals. By sending them back to us,
he saved a charge of $2.00 he would have incurred if we had just sent
him back two new disks as this is a registered owner of the product. Of
course he probably paid more than that to UPS for shipping but that is
another story. His disks arrived, we replaced them and sent them back,

no charge. And then yesterday, I got in the UPS bill for his shipment,
not for shipping charges, but for everything else imaginable. Those
costs to me are as follows: For whatever reason the disks had been
valued at $65.00? So, based on $65.00, rather than $2.00 which is really
all the disks are worth, I paid 8% GST (A new Canadian Tax) = $5.26. I
paid a UPS broker fee of $11.75, a disbursement fee (whatever that is)
of $1.75 and a Brokers GST tax of .82 cents for a total UPS charge to
process the 2 disks, of $19.58. None of these charges relate to
shipping. Now I could challenge this price based on the fact that the
$65.00 premise was wrong to begin with, but to be honest, its not worth
the aggravation of doing.

Story #2. This customer outdid himself. He sent back 3 DynaCADD disks
for updating, a free update. He valued them at US $1,300.00, again, I
have no idea where this price came from as the full suggested retail
price is US $995.00. But I now paid GST based on that amount = $105.26.
I paid a broker fee of $29.50, a disbursement fee of $7.00 and a Broker
GST of $2.07 for a total of $144.13. All this because the DynaCADD end-
user sent us back his 3 disks for a free update. Obviously, I'll fight
this one with UPS.

Even if you correctly value the disks at $2.00, UPS will still charge me
a minimum Broker Fee and disbursement fee for more than the $2.00 value.

There is a moral to this story. I want to stay in business. I keep
charging nothing to upgrade disks that cost me $20.00 or $144.13 to
receive, I'm not going to be here very long. I don't think that would
make very many people happy, not even our competition. So, when sending
disks in for an update or an upgrade from the USA, either do not use UPS
or be prepared to pay the costs of doing so. I assure you that a few
dollars spent in the post office for a special delivery or whatever,
will get your disks here about as fast.

....Any disks that are mailed back to us, arrive without a hitch. This
is the easiest way to send them. If time is a factor, then use a courier
service of some kind, BUT, value the disks at $2.00. It is an accurate
statement. As I mentioned earlier, as long as you are registered, you
cannot lose out because we will replace a lost or missing disk. Be sure
that when mailing anything to us, that you check with your local post
office for the correct postage. They do charge a few cents more to mail
to Canada than they do internally within the USA. And finally, perhaps
the best way to upgrade, pay us $2.00 for new disks when upgrading,
along with the upgrade fee.

Thanks for listening.

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                  PHASE-CHANGE VS DYE POLYMER
                    AN ERASABLE DECISION
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by Mike Stepansky

        There are some facts I wanted to tell you about the latest
optical storage technology, which was not mentioned in the recent
STReport issue 7.07. This paper will to help you to understand
more about the latest erasable optical system which incorporate
one of the several technologies: magneto-optical, phase-change
and dye-polymer.   Each technology is unique and has its own
strengths and weaknesses. A new solution for the WORM disk will be
discussed at the end.

     MAGNETO-OPTICAL (MO):   Most of the explanation on the
technical nature of MO is pretty straightforward in STReport 7.07.
The key advantage of MO media is its relative longevity. Maxwell,
Sony, Phillips DuPont Co. and others have demonstrated that their
magneto-optical media can perform more than 7 million write-erase
cycles without losing its functionality. Most manufacturers of MO
media claim a data life of approximately 10 years.   Changing
information on MO media, however, requires three passes of the
laser: one to erase, a second to write new information onto the
disk and a third to verify the new data.   The time required to
complete these steps is one of MO's greatest disadvantages.
Sectors must be erased before they can be rewritten. In addition,
unlike magnetic storage and other optical alternatives, magneto-
optical drives cannot write data a bit at a time.   Instead, an
entire track must be completely erased and then rewritten.

     PHASE-CHANGE: In the advanced phase-change approach to
rewritable optical media, laser light converts spots on a thin
film from a duller, photo-sensitive, amorphous material into a
highly reflective crystalline state.   The laser beam reads the
reflection from the crystalline surface as positive or negative
and translates the information into data. To erase data, another,
more powerful beam reverses the process, changing the spot back to
an amorphous form.   Phase-change technology has an advantage over
MO technology in that phase-change systems have direct OVERWRITE
capabilities (eliminating the third pass in MO technology).
Phase-change systems also have the ability to write data a bit at
a time.   Both of these factors produce   higher-performance
characteristics for the phase-change approach, so far.

     The read-write head assemblies in phase-change systems are
also less complicated than their MO counterparts, since they don't
rely on a magnetic coil to change the characteristics of the disk.
Studies have shown that it is possible to write and erase data
recorded on phase-change media at least 500,000 times. This means
that the user could execute a read/erase cycle once a minute for
nearly five years and still be able to store and retrieve data.
However, sophisticated detector circuits in the drive will re-
allocate questionable sectors long before any problems with erase
cycles are encountered.

     DYE POLYMER: Dye Polymer technology is another approach
being examined by firms.   It uses organic dyes to create a thin
coating on the media, usually bluish-clear in color.   The laser

beam causes small bubbles on the surface of the disk which scatter light and reduce the area's reflectivity. To erase data, the beam reduces the bubbles (as oppose to "burn" the pits in WORM technology).   It is known as "expansion vs shrinkage" phenomenon due to Curie Effect.   While no manufacturers are shipping dye-polymer systems yet, some industry experts feel that if the approach can be made commercially feasible, the media may be very cost-effective. However, in addition to stability problems, researchers are still attempting to get more than 200,000 read/write cycles from the media.

SOLUTION FOR WORM DISK: Remember, not all optical disks are created equal. The design of the media and materials used in manufacturing, even the manufacturing process itself, differs drastically from one manufacturer to another. These differences can be a help or a hinderance to your total optical storage. The majority of commercially available write-once media (WORM) is made using metals such as tellurium, antimony, selenium or bismuth. To write to the media, according to WORM technology, a laser heats microscopic pits on the disk. The heating causes changes to occur in the media's metallic layer – thus forming permanent bubbles or pits, like CD-ROM disk. These formations change the localized surface reflectivity and represent the information being stored. The data is then read by a lower power laser.

The problem with these metal-coated disks is that the metals that are used can corrode when use over time, which limits the life expectancy of the media. In addition, since standard manufacturing processes may require multiple layers of the metal, the chances of defects occurring increase with each layer that is added to the disk's surface.

Fortunately, Plasmon Data Systems has devised a bubble-forming media that solves many of the problems associated with other metal-coated disks. By using platinum, instead of tellurium or other metals, Plasmon media provides outstanding corrosion resistance, stability and strength. And Plasmon's patented manufacturing process requires only a SINGLE layer of platinum, which increases the quality of the media. Plasmon engineers have further improved the longevity and performance of their disks by learning and borrowing from nature: moth's eye.

MOTH–EYE TECHNOLOGY: Plasmon's research and engineering group has perfected a unique, patented "moth eye" construction is modeled after the corneal surface of the eye of the night moth. "This structure suppresses reflections out of the eye and enhances light absorption, which improves the moth's sight," explained one Plasmon engineer. An extreme fine, corrugated pattern is stamped on the entire surface of the disk. This pattern is very light absorbent, so little light is reflected back to the light source. When the write laser creates a bubble on the disk's surface, the corrugated surface reforms and the reflective bubbles can later be read as a bit of data.

For the past nine years, Plasmon engineers have concentrated on refining and perfecting the manufacturing techniques for their media. Innovations such as moth-eye technology and single platinum layering make Plasmon write-once media the best you can buy. Plasmon provides a LIFETIME warranty against defective workmanship and materials.

LIFESPAN: Plasmon is only major manufacturer of write-once
media that guarantees the data integrity of their media for 50
years - for archival purposes - in platinum. Tellurium, antimony
and other metals limit the life expectancy of media between 5 to
10 years.   Although dye polymer disks contain no metals, they
also have a limited lifetime of approximately 10 years.

     NOTES: Plasmon's write-once optical disk can store 940 MB of
data, higher than the usual CD-ROM storage space. Also, you might
be able to insert your own published write-once disk into a CD-ROM
drive for data retrieval or for massive software handling!   More
than that, you can even SELL your own published WORM disk because
they would follow the same format, assuming you follow the
copyrighted laws.   Also, if you wish, you can buy Pinnacle
Micro's latest 3.5" erasable optical disk that can store 128 MB of
data (call 1-800-553-7070 for pricing).   Finally, why not use an
optical disk drive on TT? <grin> It should be able to hold
enormous amount of data for audio/graphics/videos/text to be used
in a serious multimedia presentation.

     When choosing an erasable drive, either in a standalone or a
multifunction configuration,   it's important to consider the
features of the erasable technology being employed.   The type of
system chosen can make a difference in the overall performance,
dependability, cost and ultimately, in the satisfaction that it
provides.

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                         RADICAL TYPE
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by Mike Loader

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- Andover, MA   FASTECH - TURBO 20 SIZZLE!

    Jim Allen of Fast Technology has announced a number of fine new
products destined to breathe "dazzle and sizzle" into the STe line of
computers.   The Turbo 20 adapter for the 1040 STe will have an onboard
clock and the ability to take the 1040 STe ram to 14mb! he said.   Also,
for the Stacy, a special treat for STACY owners, the adapter for the Turbo
20 will have two ROM sockets (Cartridge Oriented). The Mega STe has its
own adapter for the Turbo 20 and it will allow the Mega STe to zip right
up to 10mb of RAM. He said. When asked about the '030' and its future,
he said when the time comes, (RSN), the performance curves are far in
excess of all expectations. Guess we'll have to wait and see.   Turbo 20
are also downwardly compatible as a direct replacement of the current
Turbo 16 better known as T-16.

- Erie, PA   AMIGA OWNERS BEWARE!

    It appears that a certain, recently announced, RAM upgrade is not
what it is cracked up to be. In fact, the components used in the picture
advertisement have been recognized as those custom components used in a
totally different marketplace on a totally unrelated product. This infor-
mation comes from the manufacturer of the original device as they recog-
nized their goodies being represented as a "ram upgrade" that's about the
size of the 68000. Caveat Emptor!

- Boca Raton, FL   ATARI FORUMS HAVE MIDI EXPERT & SYSOP!

    Ron Luks, head sysop of the CIS Atari fora, has confirmed the fact
that John Davis, Midi Guru for ST Informer Magazine has been brought on
board and will serve as sysop and Midi expert for Atarians.   The Atari
fora, accessed by users worldwide, have gained a great asset. Good luck
and congratulations to you John!

- Los Angeles, CA   MSTE ROMS REPORTEDLY WORK OK IN 1040STE

A reliable source has stated that the new MSTE TOS ROMS will function
properly in a 1040STE.   Therefore, once Atari makes them available as a
separate item, you will be able to upgrade the 1040STe's OS as well as its
RAM.

- Lynwood, WA   TCB TRACKER ARRIVES!!

    Get ready to rock!   The hottest music program to hit Europe is now
available. PDC is the exclusive North American distributor and supporter
of TCB Tracker.   In fact, TCB Tracker is so hot that it was officially
named the best music program of 1990 in Europe.

    What is TCB Tracker?   It's a four track music record and playback
system that includes a drum machine, sequencer, and synthesizer all built
in. In essence, it's a complete mixing studio. The notes played are all
digitized sound, so the end results are crystal clear. It allows you to
create real digital songs, mix existing songs, or use samples for your own
programs -- all in digital sound quality.

    Demos (both graphics and sound) are the hottest thing in Europe. The
premiere demo maker, "AN Cool" Nilsson, a Swedish 18 year old created TCB
Tracker to facilitate his demo creations (see ST Format article enclosed
for full story on Nilsson).   For example, the Samantha Fox demo is an
example of AN Cool's fine craftsmanship. The digitized sound sample was
easily created with TCB Tracker. In fact, doing so was the most basic of
processes.   Much more complex sounds are possible, such as the Dragnet
theme song.

    TCB Tracker will appeal to a wide audience, from the music-novice to
advanced programmers. For the MIDI musician it has full MIDI compatibili-
ty. Included for the programmer is assembly and GFA BASIC source code to
play songs/sounds in their own programs (for both the ST and STe).   In
fact, every major European software house is now using TCB Tracker to
create music in their programs. STe users will enjoy full Stereo support,
as well as Bass and Treble controls. For the novice a tutorial is incl-
uded in the manual, a help function is offered, and technical support is
available; using it is a breeze.

    TCB Tracker is quick and simple and it uses only about 29% of the com-
puter's processing time.   Amiga digitized sounds are compatible. TCB
Tracker is fully mouse and icon controlled with keyboard shortcuts for
more advanced users.   It works on all ST computers from the 520 STFM to
the Mega 4 STe (a color monitor is required). No additional equipment is
needed -- it sounds great through the monitor speaker and it pumps with
additional speakers hooked up.

    PDC has slashed the retail price of TCB Tracker from the projected
price of $99.95 to $69.95.   Additional song disks are available in a 10
disk set for $39.95. We will be fully supporting users by offering tech-
nical support, newsletters, additional sample/module disks, and much more.

    Available from:

```
                      Public Domain Corp. (PDC)
                      4320 - 196th SW Suite B-140
                      Lynnwood, WA  98036-6721

                  (206) 745-5980 - Inquiries and Questions
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> GramSlam! STR Reviewâ ¢
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                      WRITE IT RIGHT, RIGHT?, RIGHT!
                      ==============================

by Bill Pike (PAC)

    When I began writing reviews I was just having fun passing on what I
learned both the good and bad points of programs and systems.   I consis-
tently used a spelling checker and I thought if all the spelling was
correct I couldn't be far wrong. As I continued, I had more than a few
critical comments about my murdering the "King's English" (sometimes by
slow torture) by my friends and others, I found the need, read that
necessity, of improving my grammar. If I was using a Itty Bitty Machine
(IBM for the uninitiated) several programs would be available to check
grammar, at a cost of from $75 to $250, however, not using a IBM
emulator, the option was not open to me.

    To make a long story shorter. About a year-and-a-half ago I found a
demo version of a program called GramSlam.   I tried the program and it
was just what I needed, and the cost was right.   Needless to say I or-
dered the full working version within a few days. Version 1.0 was awk-
ward to work with but it did the job. The program is now at version 3.0
and works very well indeed.   GramSlam checks for 1,200 abuses of the
English language.   I am now using it consistently for all my writing.
Yes, I really purchased a program before I wrote the review. There is a
demo version of GramSlam version 3.0 on Compuspend for those who wish   to
look before buying.   I have nothing but praise for the companies provi-
ding this option of try before you buy instead of sticking you with a
program which doesn't do what you wanted.

    Enough of the background! The cost of the program is $34.95 plus
$3.00 shipping from Phil Comeau Software, 43 Rueter Street, Nepean, On-
tario, Canada K2J3Z9.

    GramSlam is a Grammar and Style Checker. This program compares words
and phrases in a document with a listing of possible errors.   The listing
has been compiled by Phil Comeau from nine, college level and beyond,
books of grammar and style.   The program will also check for variations
between American and English language spellings. Yes, you can add your

own pet phrases to the program if you wish.

Some of the features are: It works on any Atari 16 bit compatible
computer, medium and hi resolution are supported, it can be run as a
accessory or from the desktop, multi-levels of checking from Brooklyn to
formal London are supported, the program works with any text editor/word
processor which can output a ASCII file, GramSlam can also run as a ap-
plication, a readability index (FOG index, years of schooling needed to
understand the document) is shown after the check is complete along with
the statistics about the document.   Yes, It does check for double words
Cliff.

GramSlam can output to the screen, a printer, and/or a disk file all
at the same time.   You are shown the problem it has found, the context
surrounding the problem, and a suggested correction. The program is a bit
dumb, it just looks for words and phrases so some suggestions should be
taken with a grain of salt. I suggest saving the file to disk along with
the screen display. This allows you to open a second window in your word
processor/text editor containing the file of problems next to the original
document.

The manual for the program is well written, and covers just about
everything you could wish. However it doesn't cover how to install the
program on a Hard-Disk.   Opps, Oh, Well we can't be perfect. Just copy
all the files to a folder anywhere on the disk, how about in the folder
with your word processor? There is a discussion of how GramSlam works and
its limitations. A section showing examples of errors along with the
level assigned to each type of error, to give you a idea of just what the
program is reporting. The reporting environment is discussed and examples
are given.   You are shown how to edit (add) your own pet errors for the
program to find. There is also a discussion of how to interpret the
information the Document Statistics Section, shown at the completion of
the check, shows.

There is only one bad point I can find with the program, it only works
well with ASCII files.   Non-ASCII .DOC files can be checked but the pro-
gram does get confused. Why it is suggested to install the program as a
Accessory I don't know,   why is it necessary to install it as a Applica-
tion (do you wish to check every file with a particular extension)?. Just
run GramSlam as a program. I suggest saving your document in .DOC format
first (it is much easier to make corrections later) then saving the ASCII
file for checking by GramSlam.

GramSlam 3.0
$34.95 plus $3.00 shipping
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